

forward, and many troops are already in place or heading to their new positions.

I think that is a tragic error, one that I will work to correct. But at the same time we—both the Administration and the Congress—must consider what may come next.

That is why I am today introducing legislation to require that Congress be informed about the extent to which the Administration is doing the planning that is needed if we are to be prepared to respond to what our intelligence agencies tell us may be further catastrophic developments in Iraq and the region.

You'd think it wouldn't be necessary for Congress to legislate to make sure the Pentagon plans for contingencies. And when, at a recent Armed Services Committee hearing, I asked Secretary Gates whether they were doing that, his answer, while vague, was reassuring.

But vague reassurances aren't enough, and I am following up with this bill because I don't want a repeat of the performance that led the Administration to launch a war in Iraq without a plan for what would come after initial military success.

The Bush Administration was warned—by the Defense Intelligence Agency, the Pentagon's Joint Staff, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research, and the CIA's National Intelligence Council, among others—that U.S. troops could face significant postwar resistance.

And in February, 2003 an Army War College report warned that without an “overwhelming” effort to prepare for the U.S. occupation of Iraq, “The United States may find itself in a radically different world over the next few years, a world in which the threat of Saddam Hussein seems like a pale shadow of new problems of America's own making.”

But despite these warnings, the Bush Administration rushed ahead without a comprehensive plan in place to secure and rebuild the country once our military had achieved its initial objectives.

We all know where that has led us—to the point where, according to the just-released National Intelligence Estimate (NIE) on Iraq, we're faced with a deteriorating situation in Iraq in which “Iraqi society's growing polarization, the persistent weakness of the security forces and the state in general, and all sides' ready recourse to violence are collectively driving an increase in communal and insurgent violence and political extremism.”

And now we are being warned that things well may get even worse.

Specifically, the NIE states that as Iraq's security environment worsens, three prospective security paths could emerge—chaos leading to partition, the emergency of a Shia strongman, or anarchic fragmentation of power.

Madam Speaker, the NIE is the Administration's own document, and the most authoritative written judgment of the Director of National Intelligence with respect to Iraq. I think it must be taken seriously, and I think we in Congress must demand to be told—specifically and in detail—just how the Administration is preparing to respond should any one of those contingencies occur.

That is what my legislation calls for. It would require that by June 30th of this year the Administration inform the House and Senate Armed Services Committees just how the Department of Defense and other agencies

would respond to each of the three scenarios identified by the NIE, with an explanation of the proposed role of U.S. troops under each scenario, including a comprehensive analysis identifying and justifying the number of U.S. troops needed in each case.

As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I want assurances that this Administration is thinking about and planning for troubling possibilities they themselves have depicted. No one wants chaos or increased violence in Iraq, but it would be irresponsible not to plan for those possibilities. While looking at Iraq through rose-colored glasses may make us feel better, we will only do right by our men and women in uniform if we plan for likely contingencies, however unpalatable.

Of course, this legislation isn't intended to solve the larger problem of Iraq. To do that, we need a policy aimed at escalating diplomatic and political efforts and lightening the U.S. footprint in Iraq. But so far the President instead is continuing to embrace the idea that the solution is more troop.

Defense Secretary Gates has said that we'll know within months whether or not that escalation has been successful. So it isn't too soon to begin planning now for what may come next. And it is high time for Congress to insist that the Administration is responding to that essential.

TRIBUTE TO DAN E. STRAIGHT

HON. MARK UDALL

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, February 16, 2007

Mr. UDALL of Colorado. Madam Speaker, I rise today to note the passing of Dan E. Straight. Although Mr. Straight did not reside in my district, he worked on an issue within my district that was dear to his heart—the preservation and reopening of the Rollins Pass road over the Continental Divide near Winter Park, Colorado.

Mr. Straight passed away last week. He led a full life that included patriotic service to our country. He served in the U.S. Air Force for years and saw action in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. He also served his community through work with the Boy Scouts, the American Red Cross and his local Rotary.

And because he loved history and the outdoors, he was a champion for the reopening of the Rollins Pass road. Also known as the Moffat Road due to its proximity to the Moffat railroad tunnel, this road was used as a stage and narrow gauge railroad corridor taking passengers from Colorado's east slope communities to the homesteads, resources and recreational activities on the western slope. Rollins Pass contains historic railroad features such as dramatic trestles that span creek valleys and a feature aptly called the Needle Eye Tunnel near the top. Due to age, rock fall has occurred in the tunnel and it has remained closed.

Due to Mr. Straight's efforts, I included language in the James Peak Wilderness and Protection Area Act to allow for the reopening of the Rollins Pass road to two-wheel drive vehicles. Conversations are occurring between the acted countries and the U.S. Forest Service in this regard. I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Straight as we were working on this legisla-

tion. It was clear that he had a love for this road, this state and this country and he served it all with distinction and passion.

Madam Speaker, I have attached a story from the Longmont Times-Call newspaper noting his passing.

[From the Daily Times—Call, Feb. 9, 2007]

LONGMONT LOSES ‘THE COLONEL’

(By Trevor Hughes)

LONGMONT.—Dan E. Straight, a retired Air Force colonel and tireless advocate of reopening Rollins Pass Road over the Continental Divide to Winter Park, died suddenly Wednesday. He was 84.

A longtime local resident, Straight volunteered with groups ranging from the American Red Cross to the Boy Scouts. He helped launch the Twin Peaks Rotary.

Originally from Greeley, Straight and his family settled in Longmont around 1976 after he retired from the Air Force, for which he had flown more than 29 types of aircraft. The front fuselage of one of them, a B-26B Marauder nicknamed “Flack Bait,” is displayed at the Smithsonian.

Straight, known locally to many as “The Colonel,” was one of many pilots of the storied World War II bomber. He flew one mission in the bomber, on Valentine's Day 1945, carrying his young daughter's shoe in his pocket so she'd always be near.

Straight often regaled high school students with stories from his service during World War II, Korea and Vietnam, according to his family.

He and Juanita also were Red Cross volunteers who helped Special Transit transport people in Longmont and Boulder County to medical appointments.

But it was perhaps his 25-year presidency of the Rollins Pass Restoration Association that brought Straight the most local attention. The pass, along an old railroad grade and through the Needle's Eye Tunnel, offers a shortcut between Boulder and Grand counties.

The 23-mile route fell out of use by trains in 1928, when the 6.2-mile Moffat Tunnel was completed. With the tracks removed in the late 1920s, trains gave way to cars, and for decades the pass and tunnel drew sightseers and travelers from across the Front Range.

Part of the Needle's Eye Tunnel collapsed in 1979, but it was re-opened to cars in 1987 before another partial collapse that injured a sightseer closed it again in 1990.

“I'm just amazed at the people who built it,” Straight said in 2003.

Technically difficult to pull off at 11,000 feet, the tunnel-stabilization project entailed drilling eight-foot holes into the tunnel walls and roof, then gluing in inch-thick steel rods.

The 1990 collapse injured an area firefighter who was hit by falling rocks from the roof of the tunnel's southern entrance.

The cause: a single missing rock bolt. Ironically, the space where the missing bolt should be is clearly visible in the commemorative photos given to association members. Straight took that photo, a signed copy of which hangs in the Times-Call newsroom.

Despite the setback, Straight remained committed to reopening the tunnel, and negotiations among local officials about fixing it continue to this day.

“That was his favorite mission in life,” said his daughter Su Eckhardt.

She added that Straight was involved in many other endeavors, including the Longmont Rotary Club, Westview Presbyterian Church, the Masons, the Shriners, the St. Vrain Photographic Society and the Salvation Army.

“He made a commitment beyond simply joining and paying dues,” she said.